

III



a dead spot of light ...

Introduction

Yes, the cover arts are no more. Sorry, but I had no choice. After a long consultation of the Creative Commons licenses, the faqs and a lot of other sites with additional explanations, I realized that I am unable to release this magazine with cover artworks in it; at least this is the way I read the texts. The matters are not so easy as they may seem on the first glance, but I want to make sure my works will not get deleted from the Internet Archive and accordingly I have to get the thing with the license right. This means also that I have to alter the old versions again and remove the cover arts ... yes, sorry for the mess.

So much about modern times ... so much about the freedom of the Internet...

Well, as this is the third issue already, I think I have the specific style and concept for this magazine. Simple, with some nice old pictures and in a small pdf file. Even though I have not worked with interviews and essays so far, I doubt their appearance will look much different than anything that was done before.

In this edition the reviews have a focus on free releases; i.e. releases made available for free by bands and artists on several Internet sites. It is easier to write on this type of stuff and when it comes to style as well as concept, I am able to access a great pool of interesting music and do not face the difficulties in having to buy all of them; releases get lost in mail, the sending is delayed etc.

The forthcoming issues will have a larger focus on 'physical' releases again ...

I hope you enjoy reading this magazine and feel free to give me some feedback on it.

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Eemian – Esker

(Dark Ambient, Drone; Spain (do not believe the MySpace site))

4 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel -- Audiotalaia) ----- (35:29)

<http://audiotalaia.net/at029.html>; <http://www.myspace.com/eemian>

Minimalist ... really minimalist. At times it is a bit difficult to actually describe the music and find the proper words for the sounds and noises. At times, the performance has such a low amount of facets and element that to characterize and measure the quality of the compositions is a real challenge. Eemian's Esker release is of such a kind, but it is possible to give some hints into a certain direction nevertheless.

Alright, when you take a look on the cover artwork, then the Austrian band Vinterriket could come to one's mind; especially when taking the aforementioned musical conception into consideration. Esker is calm, minimalist and has a strong focus on drone and atmosphere. It does not reach levels of the 'Constant' series, but on Esker everything was stripped down to a few elements as well. Vague textures loom in the background, further ones -- like the howling of a wind or a vague memory of an abandoned machine, whose last sounds echo over a barren landscape -- were woven into the compositions, too. Not everyone will like the quite peculiar and stripped down style of music on this release, but thanks to its hypnotic touch it can be enjoyed; yes, the realm of monotony is close but Eemian is able to avoid it; not always though. Even though the aforementioned reference is the obvious point to turn to, the performance of the Spanish artist avoids the longform of the approach; the Constant series generally consists of quite long compositions, some even reach the seventy minutes barrier. So here we have a more condensed and short version of this type of music and I am able to enjoy the compositions and this might have to do with the way I tend to listen to a lot of music: via headphones; which is strongly recommended. So, my final point would be this: give Esker some time and try to enjoy it in a 'controlled environment'; i.e. without much distraction and not when little time is available.



Adrián Juárez - Amílcar

(Drone; Argentina)

15 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel – Two left hands on two right arms) ----- (47:03)

<http://www.archive.org/details/tlhotra012>; <http://tlhotra.50webs.com/nr/012.html>; <http://www.adrianjuarez.com/>

I stumbled over this release by mere chance. Being a recommended one or better said staff pick at the Internet Archive, I saw it on the front-page of the site, while visiting it not very long ago. Even though a lot of these 'supported' releases were never of a kind which would thoroughly fascinate me, the one by Adrián Juárez caught my attention. Why? Well, unlike a lot of netlabel music on this particular site, this one would actually be somehow outré: a collaboration from two different areas of the arts – and an interesting one as well:

Amílcar is a collection of ambient/drone pieces of conceptual nature. Each track include an image made by Mexican artist Leopoldo to complement the music.

This quote was taken from the band site at the Internet Archive and it gives you an idea of what to expect. In style drone with some ambient influences and therefore rather calm and minimalist, images whose concept remind on the attempt to visualize music according to their temperature: some vague spots or areas can be found but nothing definite. Like the music, the images are anything but concrete and they leave it up the listener/viewer to see the connection between the audio and the visuals. The first track for instance is of a quite dark kind, with somehow irritating sound elements and therefore the colour tone is also rather dark and comes with huge contrast in the colours. Of the second one the contrary can be said: it is gentle and calm, which is then also represented in the arrangements of the colours.

I do not want to discuss every tiny bit and track of this rather short release, but I find the idea of combining these two different branches of art interesting and it compensates the listener in some respect for the lack in length. It is a bit difficult to really let the ideas sink and to focus on the conceptual arrangements as these end all too soon; somehow surprising when considering the genres with which the band is associated. Nevertheless, I want to recommend this release and I hope to find more of such collaborations in the future.

Torba – The Snowdrones

(Drone/doom/noise, Harsh Noise; Germany)

3 Tracks (MP3/Tape – Self-released) ----- (18:00)

<http://www.myspace.com/torbadrone>

The first thing you do before listening to this album is the following:

Delete the first track.

Yes, I am serious. Delete it. Schnee – German for Snow – is nothing but harsh noise and even though it is merely twelve seconds in length, it is still annoying and disturbing. Moreover, I would go so far to state that it does not even fit into the entire album.

Snowdrone pt.I starts drone/doom in vain of chords with some which create a calm atmosphere. Unlike the drums appear here and minimalist in its and even though the the end of the first and of this track are overall tension, they are and are therefore not further be noted that the third track: from some sort of So, while some amount preserved, it is of a therefore not perceived the noisy facets.



with some sort of Earth: slow played amount of reverb, and peaceful American band, no the music is even more concept. Yet, it works noise effects towards also in the second part disruptions of the kept in tolerable levels too disturbing. It should the style changes with drone/doom towards drone/noise/ambient. of the calmness is different kind now and as being disrupted by

What could have made this release better? Well, maybe some additional variation in the arrangements or some further elements – noise textures for instance – would have been welcome in order to divert the attention of the listener a bit. Yet, in those moments in which nothing but calm and somehow sad music is appropriate, in times of exhaustion, the performance of Torba on The Snowdrones might be something worthy to turn to. The first part of the snowdrones more than the second one though.

Torba / Nube split

Torba

(Noise/Harsh Noise; Germany)

3 Tracks (MP3/tape – Self-released) ----- (15:10)

<http://www.myspace.com/torbadrone>

Well ... the torment begins with the opening track, which consists of a good amount of harsh noise, with a somehow parody ending – a voice speaks: 'is still alive'. The succeeding one is not much different, but less harsh and aggressive. Nine minutes are filled with noises are various kinds and it is not even bad; a bit tiring maybe, because Torba really tried hard, but I fail to see the path. Gekreuzigte – crucified ones in English – would be the last track and also the calmest one. It is basically a noise texture in the background with a guitar on top of it. At least from my perspective it may also be the best, because it has a structure and provides me therefore with something to concentrate or focus on. I am able to enjoy noise, just not the type Torba is performing on their site of the split.

Some nice moments now and then, but unable to really fascinate me.

Nube

(Industrial/Harsh Noise; Germany)

3 Tracks (MP3/tape – Self-released) ----- (12:03)

<http://www.myspace.com/deadinbasement666>

Unlike the preceding band Torba, Nube does rely on clearly distinguishable rhythms and motives, which gives the harsh nature of the music at least direction. Imagine Stigma Diabolicum and Zarach 'Baal' Tharagh join forces and adding additional noise facets into their art, the result might be something not very far away from this. Nube's music is extreme – especially 'Buio' – but somehow listenable. The industrial rhythms might be responsible for this.

Extrem but enjoyable ...

Final note:

The best thing about this release might be the following:
self-released on 20 recycled cassettes from DDR

Herr Åberg och Fröken Ankarborg - Jag rör mig obehindrat nu

(Electronic, Poetry; Sweden)

<http://www.archive.org/details/tlhotra007>

3 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel – Two left hands on two right arms) ----- (12:53)

To give you an idea what this album is all about:

Three different persons – a electro disco queen, a neurotic scary movie lover and a reggae boy – and therefore three different personalities and a poem. Each expresses and interprets it in a slightly new way and it is up the listener to pick the character, whose style and concept appeals the most.

A nice concept some might say and I would give a similar statement. Yet, when it comes to the execution of this idea, then I have to object. Maybe it is due to my fascination for radio plays which give me a hard time enjoying the music by *Herr Åberg och Fröken Ankarborg*. Maybe my objection has not so much to do with the music itself, but rather with the way the 'poem' was performed by the three personalities. Aside from the language barrier on my side – the bloody ignorant German that I am – I fail to grasp the atmosphere of each character as all of these were performed by one female voice only. So, with some slight variations in terms of the overall style the vocals were performed but these do



not give the impression of creating a certain specific rhythm or style someone could associate with the characters. Where is the difference between the three persons? To which element am I supposed to point towards in order to distinguish them from each other. I fail to get the idea and I doubt someone else, whose language skills would show the same gap in terms of Swedish, would have an easier task. So, even though the music is not overtly bad and Version *TRE är för dig som hellre gungar ljud effekter med knäna* is actually quite good, the execution of the overall concept is wanting and drags the whole quality of the album down. More would have been possible.

Ov Hollowness – Demo 2010

(Black Metal; Canada)

4 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) ----- (26:44)

<http://www.myspace.com/OVhollowNESS>

Free downloads are a hit or miss. You do not know what you get, but the advantage of downloading free stuff is that you can get rid of the stuff easily. In case of Ov Hollowness such might not be the necessary – the latter argument –, because on their first demo they are already able to write some interesting compositions as well as create a decent atmosphere. Surprisingly, also a nine minute compositions is able to fascinate in some respect and does not come with the fallacies a lot of bands tend to web into their music: too much repetition, too many vocals etc.

A lot was done right here and I want to draw your attention especially on the last track of this demo: Rest in Chaos. Not only is it exceedingly catchy, it comes also with some cool rhythms and riffs. Compared with the rather atmospheric/depressive opener of Demo 2010, this one pounces forward like a hungry beast after its prey. Nice lead-guitar motives, a well crafted variation of the motives and also a drum-computer that does not suck – compensated through the other facets – make up this well crafted piece of black metal art. Moreover, as the band further avoids the pitfall of wanting to express too much in too little time, the listener is really able to enjoy the way the motives unfold their beauty.

Well, what can I say... except for some slightly weak vocals, a drum-computer and the absence of a general direction on the demo I have not much to complain about. This band should get a label to spread their stuff under more professional circumstances.

Nest – Nest

(Ambient, Folk; Wales/Norway)

6 Tracks (MP3 – netlabel -- Serein) ----- (27:40)

<http://www.archive.org/details/ser013>

Andreas Vollenweider, I simply cannot help myself, comes to the mind when listening to this ep by Nest, which was recently re-released on CD – remastered and with additional tracks. Nest's music is of a very calm and inoffensive kind. It is the type that reminds you on your childhood, on a peaceful plain and atmosphere, which will never ever be disturbed by anything or anyone. It is like an imagery dance of fairies of spirits in a grove, like it is mentioned at times in the fantastic literatures of the modern ages. The steadiness of the rhythms, the lightness and the mysticism of the chords are fascinating and this release by Nest is a rare example for creating minimalist but intense music.

An important aspect is the piano. Not only has the play a focal position in the musical concept of the band, as it works as a counterpoint to everything else in a composition. The sound of this instrument is somehow re-assuring and takes the listener gently by the hand, while in the background the music heads off in a different direction; but the listener does not have to care about it, because one can be sure about one aspect: the piano will always be there and lead the path; whatever there might come. Each aspect of the music alone might result in something



plain or ordinary, but the combination of these is what makes the concept interesting. It is hard to point towards a track which I like best, but they arrangements in Marefjellet and the overall tone and motives are not only interesting but comes with a really nice atmosphere. They together give the impression of a mystical dance in some enchanted wood...

This release got some well deserved praises on its entry at the Internet Archive and I would like to join in. If you are in haste or in the mood for something wild, then avoid this piece of art like poison. Yet, in case you feel like needing rest and want to lay back while enjoying some gentle tunes, then this piece by Nest is quite appropriate for it.

Xenis Emputae Travelling Band

The origin of the Xenis Emputae Travelling Band is Cornwall and it consists of no more than one member. Compared with a lot of other bands whose line-up is similar, the fallacies with which such a line-up can be associated, does rarely appear here. Why? Well, XETP is able to cover it behind layers of weird arrangements and out of the ordinary musical structures. Several releases are discussed below.

Xenis Emputae Travelling Band - Under a Soular Moon

(Dark Ambient, Noise; United Kingdom)

9 Tracks (MP3 – Larkfall) ----- (36:45)

<http://www.larkfall.co.uk/>

Under a Soular Moon was the first release which was made available as a free download on the [Larkfall homepage](http://www.larkfall.co.uk/) and compared with the *Goat Willow* one – this would be the fourth one – for instance it offers something utterly different in style. Dark ambient with noise elements, samples and the like is offered on nine tracks. Due to its repetitive style and oscillating sound elements, it reminds on soundtracks or sound effects in horror movies. *Under a Soular Moon* is dark and depressive but also quite hard to endure. Music like torment, from some pit of hell, from some layer in a deep abyss... this is the impression one gains while listening to this piece of art. Forget about all the crap created by the LLN, this is something really disturbing. Even though I am able to recognize the quality in the "song-writing", to me it is hard to thoroughly enjoy the music. It offers just this one set of characteristics and even though the band was good at creating it, you might want to have something more at times. The *Xenis Emputae Travelling Band* does not move an inch away from their concept and it becomes a bit of a strain to listen to over a longer period of time. Combined with other and less dark music it might work well and it could be used as a counter-point towards it, but this release alone is nothing that would fascinate me.



Dark Ambient fans and those who have a fancy of horror-movie inspired sounds might want to give it a try.

Xenis Emputae Travelling Band - A Selenographic Lens

(Ambient, Noise, Field Recordings; United Kingdom)

2 Tracks (MP3 – Larkfall) ----- (22:39)

<http://www.larkfall.co.uk/>

A different release, a different style. Was the preceding one of a somehow peculiar dark ambient style, *A Selenographic Lens* comes with something quite unrelated to this. XETP seem to have followed the Monty Python idea: ... and now for something completely different *explosion*.

A *Selenographic Lens* may be described as ambient with noise/field recordings/folk elements/instruments. Two songs, with a structure which is closer to ambient/drone than normal folk music, can be found on this album. In a strange kind

of way they apply to the description of being hypnotic, yet without being able to create a cheering or depressive mood. It is also too complex for some sort of background sound, some might use to kill time or to read a book. The music needs attention and especially the (random) chord structures of the instruments always attempt to grab the listener for a moment or two. Moreover, Bogle Burn has also some clearly distinguishable melody lines, which are, despite their shortness, a welcome distraction and create a focus on the overall structure behind the compositions. Nevertheless, the length and the sheer complexity in the art make it difficult to digest it easily. As any other of the outputs by this band, also this one needs its time to unfold its 'beauty'.

Experimental might be the proper phrase here or even extravagant. XETP are weird and outside of anything that is normal ... so it is difficult to give a recommendation, but fans of dark ambient or noise might want to give this band a try.

Xenis Emputae Travelling Band - Lords of the Green Grass

(Folk, Ambient; United Kingdom)

6 Tracks (MP3 – Larkfall) ----- (32:24)

<http://www.larkfall.co.uk/>

Lords of the Green Grass is the free release number three out of four and it is the one I listened to last. Again, and this should surprise no one, the band offers a different set of elements and characteristics on this album; not to mention add vocals to the music for the first time. Six compositions are presented here and they change quite a lot in terms of the arrangements and atmospheres. While folk is certainly a dominating factor in the music, influences from the preceding albums can be found here as well; ambient/noise. Nevertheless, a track like Shine Abroad Brightly or also By Silverhand Stream – reminds me on Karl Seglem – have an interesting atmospheric concept behind them; the former with a moaning like flute, the latter with some harsh play of some wind instrument. Generally speaking, the music is quite calm and provides a mixture between folk arrangements with ambient characteristics. Compared with the music of October Falls for instance, the music is less minimalist and depressing. Actually, it is able to create some sort of positive vibe, which takes the listener along through the motives; especially when the vocals are around. Nevertheless, the overall experimental nature of it all as well as the free style in the flow of the music, make it not an easy task for everyone to enjoy the music.

Those who are interested in folk outside the ordinary spectrum might want to give their release by XETB a try.

Xenis Emputae Travelling Band - Goat Willow

(Folk, Ambient, Noise; United Kingdom)

1 Track (MP3 – Larkfall) ----- (18:28)

<http://www.larkfall.co.uk/>

One of the goals when creating this magazine was to shed some light on obscure bands, independent from scene or location. The Xenis Emputae Travelling Band would be one of these and I got in touch with their music rather by chance. It happened this way: Aslak Tolonen, the person behind the Finnish ambient/folk band Nest, started, with several other musicians from other groups, a project with the name Where Rivers End; one track appears on a Larkfall sampler -- Reynardine: The Visits of Mister Fox – already and this one composition can be downloaded as an excerpt from the label's homepage.

Back to the Xenis Emputae Travelling Band (XETB): Goat Willow has one track on it; one long track. 18:28 minutes to be precise. It was originally released as a 3" CD and is now available as a download. The music is of a outré kind and it is difficult if not impossible to thoroughly enjoy this one long composition. XETB's performance might be described as experimental. There is an emphasis on folk, but also drone and ambient make an experience. When I speak of folk in terms of this band, then the impression of catchy, melodic or even commercial one should be abandoned from the mind before giving this band a try. As Goat Willow can be separated into several parts, it is best to discuss each of them separately:

First part: (00:00–04:50)

Several layers of vocals, whose sound ranges from singing to mimicking of drone music. In the background, instruments create dissonant sounds. Imagine overtone singing/music but performed in an experimental and noisy fashion.

Second part: (04:51–10:25)

Acoustic music with folk influences. The voices create a harmonic sound here, unlike in the previous segment. Somehow surprising is the way the music fades out: while cheering at the beginning, the end is rather odd and comes with some sort of parody-like counterpoint of it.

Third part: (10:26–14:27)

A minimalist kind of music. Here the dissonance factor as well as the experimental one make an appearance again. Being somehow ritualistic and monotonous in style it is able to create some fascination, but compared with the preceding part, it is nothing but a contradiction of the ideas and atmospheres.

Fourth part: (14:28–end)

Recitation might cover what is going on in this part. Clean and 'normal' – compared with the earlier version – voices sing the lyrics again. The music consists of an acoustic guitar with some of the dissonant elements used in the preceding segments.

When you listen to this one long composition for the first time, then you might find it pretty hard to enjoy, because the way the elements of the music were arranged together is a bit tiring. To me the composition has some nice moments, but is overall too segmented and lacks of flow. The surprise rather stems of the inability to anticipate what comes next, rather than a neat arrangement or idea, which I would not have expected the band to use. So, it takes endurance to listen to the whole composition and it is an ambivalent experience.

Power und Beauty – Gnome

(Experimental Folk; Ambient; United States of America)

4 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released/Netlabel – Peppermill Records) ----- (17:59)

<http://www.myspace.com/powerundbeauty>; <http://www.peppermillrecords.com/>

There is a label in Canada whose releases generally tend to fascinate me. Its name: Peppermill Records. It is the proper place to turn to in order to find music outside the ordinary routine. Just listen to their 30 days compilation – one of the albums I always wanted to write about – and you get an idea what kind of art is generally released by them.



Back to the topic, Power und Beauty was a four-women band from the USA – they are defunct for the moment –, but it is still possible to get one of their releases; not sure whether they have more. And it is a splendid one indeed. How sweet the voices. How sweet the melodies. How sweet and positive the vibe which surrounds every tiny little piece of this album. You cannot possibly hate this album ...

The line-up was (partially – see below; → exception) as follows:
Sarah Moyer – vegetable steamer (mistreated for percussion)
Caroline Fowler – a battery powered Yamaha keyboard while playing the tambourine
Anna Collins-Wakeman – duel glockenspiel and shaker technique
Karli Fairbanks – accordion

The outcome: accordion driven folk with weird (cheap?) drums – Beggars and Felons – and loads of vocals by the four members of the band. The especially the aforementioned

composition shows the potential in the band. With a catchy tune, interesting variations in the chorals/vocals and an interesting rhythm in the background they are easily able to get the attention of the listener. They make use of the ... how do I describe this ... large array of different 'instruments' and create some fascinating and surprisingly catchy tunes. Of course are the vocals the main focus but also the basis of the music is pretty interesting and outside the ordinary routine.

The exception:

The Author of Spring would be an exception on this album for several reasons: it comes without an accordion, has guitars as well as a banjo (?); just to name the important ones. In style the music has shifted towards a ballad folk song with a slight country touch. With its dark tone it concludes the progression the music takes over the course of the album: from cheering and ironic to something Tori Amos inspired over to a slightly dark and sad atmosphere.

Again:

you cannot possibly hate this album ...

Note:

Their ep can either be downloaded from Peppermill Records or from the band's MySpace site.

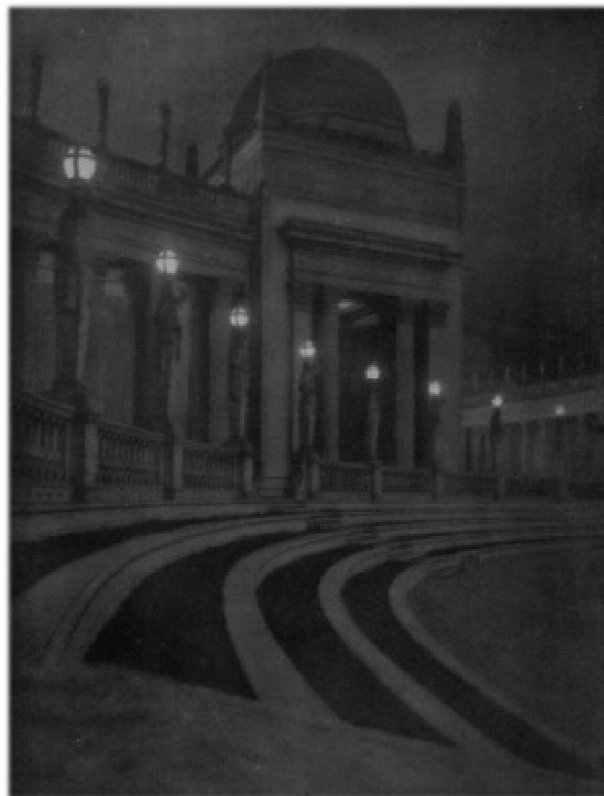
Wainas – Tuomio

(Doom, Death Metal; Finland)

3 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) ----- (25:14)

<http://www.myspace.com/wainas>

Luckily no funeral doom and no depressive black metal. Wainas stick to the death/doom metal side of it all and avoid the pitfall of creating some absurd form of endless wanking about how miserable life can be; with all the obvious boring and plain mess. The three songs on their debut demo are quite heavy, slow and even well produced. In terms of the style the music is more on the death than on the doom side; it more or less in the middle ground with some peaks in lower direction. Well performed growls, some rare solo elements, well performed/written riffs round up a positive impression. It is easy to like this demo, because the music is generally catchy and rarely boring or plain. The tension and atmosphere is kept up and no plain/boring/displaced sound sample in the middle of the track disturbs the performance. Heavy, powerful and of a pretty basic concept.



The downside of it all is the lyrics/music ratio which is a bit too high at times – II – and it is therefore hard to thoroughly enjoy the music. Moreover, as there are no neat interludes or anything else that might create a lasting impression, the compositions pass by but leave nothing behind. So, even though Wainas did a good job on their first demo, balancing issues in the song-writing leave a slight bitter taste. Nevertheless, Tuomio is still worth checking out.

Winterburst – Demo

(Symphonic Black Metal; France)

6 Tracks (MP3/OGG – Self-released) ----- (34:59)

<http://www.jamendo.com/de/artist/Winterburst>; <http://www.myspace.com/winterburst>

The first demo of the French band Winterburst follows a rather modern approach in the black metal genre. The music is well produced, comes with a good amount of power, is also well balanced and quite catchy as well as interestingly written. Of course play the keyboards an important role in the concept of the band, but they do not attempt to drown

the other instruments with a constant layer; nevertheless, the sound and arrangements are a bit cheesy at times. Their overall share is rather small, while the guitars play the important role in the concept. Aside from the rhythm section, lead-guitar elements enrich the music in a really neat way: be it solos – The Sign Of The Black Ivy – or neat melodies on top of the instruments, Winterburst appear with a large amount of variety on their first demo. So, even though the band merely brought older ideas together on their first release and offered something not particularly new, the performance is still quite good and enjoyable.

Fans of Graveworm (minus the harsh screams), Old Man's Child, Dimmu Borgir and the similar ones might want to give this band a try.

Soul Extinction – Lost

(Death, Black Metal; Sweden)

8 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) ---- (48:25)

<http://www.myspace.com/soulextinction>; [http://www.jamendo.com/en/artist/Soul Extinction](http://www.jamendo.com/en/artist/Soul_Extinction)



When you take a look at their profile at Jamendo, then you would not be able to get a lot of information. Where are they from? When did the project start? Who is involved in this band? Well, they also have a MySpace profile and it helps to clear matters up. Sweden would be their home country and two members are involved and judging from the information, the vocalist would be a female; her growls are quite good but reach not the level of Herem's Valendis Suomalainen.

Anyway, the title of this release reflects the quality of the performance to a good deal. Lost. The band is lost, because they do not seem to be entirely sure about what to do. Take the second track: a ten minute (!) instrumental (!!), which – even though not overly boring – appears displaced and way too long. Whatever reason there has been to put it on this specific spot in the album, I am unable to get it. Aside from this quite odd flaw, the band delivers a solid performance of death metal with some black metal influences. A somehow characteristic element in the music are the drums and the pondering dominant rhythm created by them; this is especially apparent as the production/mix has provided them with quite a lot of power. It is not possible to miss the drum-computer bass drum texture in the sound, but even though it is quite monotonous in style, it

nevertheless provides the concept of Soul Extinction with the proper basis.

Aside from this it is actually possible to listen to the music. The genre was not re-invented here, but the quality is still not bad. Quite the contrary, the riffs are good, the music has a lot of dynamic and would there be less vocals, then Lost might be much better; the band could simply not resist the temptation to overload the compositions with texts. Nevertheless, this is a good performance with too many lyrics but some catchy and quite heavy tunes. Fans of black/death should really give this release a try.

30 Days compilation

(Various; countries: various)

30 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel -- Peppermill Records) ----- (82:16)

<http://www.peppermillrecords.com/>

The metal scene is limited. It is limited because the musicians rather tend to believe in their own abilities in creating art then using the influences/help from other fellow artists in order to improve their own specific style of sound. There are several distinct movement in the scene: side-projects which will cover a variety of genres, participating in bands of the same genre as one's main band. Maybe metal is too conservative to bring up something similar like 30 days, maybe it is too limited in its style and concept to reach for something of such variety as the first output of the Canadian label Peppermill Records.

First of all and this is important: you need to listen to this release in its entirety at least once or twice. If you do not have the time at the moment to take such a trip, then let it be and wait for the proper moment to come. Why is this important? Well, you need to know something of the idea behind 30 Days to understand my previous remark. This small text was taken from the

This album was created in artists, in a sort of chain-finished at midnight and continue the set, an idea With all the different time scheduling issues the project think that added to the feel of quite the feat as it turned out

Thirty days ... and thirty artists approach the album from a without much of a music and the weird this is the strength of the Each song comes with a new some of the earlier motives composition. The listener calm, aggressive, amusing bizarre that no one under the have ever been able to create masses and these thirty artists are hardly able to describe the especially when it comes to genres. It is a bombardment of though they might be when judged separately, the on this very album clearly shows what kind of unity with how many facets can be achieved. Music is often preferred when it sticks to one particular style or approach, which is then executed on a high level and with some skill in the song-writing, but the 30 days compilation shed light on a different path: an eclectic concept can reach for some sort of special kind of art, which would not have been touched otherwise and this is able to compensate whatever short-coming in the execution and song-writing there may have been.



label's homepage:

thirty days by thirty different collaboration where one passed it on to the next to inspired by Soulseek Records. zones and last minute was quite the challenge, and I it, these musicians pulled off quite musical.

... does this work? You should neutral perspective and preconceived opinion. Let the arrangements flow, because album: its unconventionality. set of ideas, while webbing into a new and different takes a trip through a strange, and noisy spheres. A trip so impression of drugs would this alone. Madness comes in deliver on a high scale. Words outré kind of 30 days; cover the amount of different a variety of these and even perceived as quite contrasting, way they have been merged

My favourite part would be on the second CD. After the track by *Sunny D. Levine* is over the music really gets going and progresses in such weird realms, switches so neatly between normality and insanity, calmness and extreme beat motives that it is impossible for me not to really enjoy it. *Zephyr Nova's Patterns and Parallels* might really take the cake for being the most fucked up piece of art on both CDs combined. Countless breaks, noise and so many different ideas thrown together that you better do not even attempt counting them ... for the sake of sanity. This track would also mark the transition to the normal music again. The closing composition by Alice Rose "A Poem In Slow Motion" is

not only a nice contrast to the harshness of some of the previous parts, but with the clean and sung vocals it takes the listener somehow out of this Azagthothian realm and towards somewhere less chaos ridden.

Compared with the first collaboration sampler by *Soulseek Records*, the *30 Days* one is rather calm and also in terms of the music more controlled. Of course it is impossible to keep a high tempo over thirty tracks and it is no surprise to see the music switch quite abruptly into a slower regions. So, in order to 'really get it' or 'enjoy' the trip it is best to listen to the music on the whole. Even though I have some favourites among the thirty compositions and like to listen to them separate from the rest, the full spin of the album gives me a different kind of satisfaction and mood. Every time I jump at a single spot and 'start' from there, I have the feeling of missing something.

Hopefully the metal scene will be able to create something similar one day.

Bergmál – Unni

(Post-Rock; Ambient; Sweden)

3 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel – D.N.A. Netlabel) ----- (13:52)

<http://www.myspace.com/bergmalmusic>; <http://dnanetlabel.altervista.org/>

Another fine release by the Italian *D.N.A. netlabel* and this time we have some post-rock/ambient art offered for free download. Sweden would be the origin of the band and on three tracks they offer some neat mixture of post-rock with ambient influences. Three songs, around fourteen minutes in length is what can be found on *Unni* and it offers a concept you can find in a lot of bands of this style. A general calm approach with some eruptions in the atmosphere; there are even some vocals in it. When it comes to the song-writing, then the ideas are rather kept on a certain level and the amount of variation and experimentation is not too excessive. Also additional instruments aside from the obvious ones are searched in vain, so on their first release the Swedish musicians stayed true to the basic formula of the genre. Cheering, catchy and melodic ... these are three words which come to my mind while listening to this release.

To me the compositions are too short and could use some additional variation.

o.68 - The Omnipresence of Death

(Doom, Death Metal; Germany)

2 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) ----- (12:30)

<http://www.myspace.com/o68>

The title has quite a heavy meaning and in some respect the music or better said the lyrics are able to live up to it. Vague glimpses can be caught on the content of the compositions and even though some of them are rather 'emo', the aspect of death plays a role as well. This ep is some sort of an appetizer for the forthcoming album '*Elend*'.

Two tracks appear on *The Omnipresence of Death* and they follow a basic and also predictable approach: dark music, enwrapped in sound samples (beginning/end) which do not only enrich the overall sound and atmosphere but work furthermore more as a transition between the tracks. Whether or not this works is a rather ambivalent topic: they support the music but as the vocals are some sort of growls, it is difficult to see how these two facets work together; *Mother of Negation*.

Distorted guitars, generally slow in tempo, a thick and massive sound and a somehow dark or even depressive atmosphere is what can be found in the two compositions. Doom with death metal and a pretty consistent approach when it comes to the this ep. Both of the tracks are not very far off from each other and even their length shows some similarities. Yet, even though the performance is not bad and the tracks are pretty listenable as well as without graven flaws, I find the music a bit too predictable as well as shallow. In case the music on the ep is representative for the forthcoming album, then this might be something really hard to endure. Everything seems to drown in this depressive atmosphere and there is hardly a counter-point or relieve in sight. *The Omnipresence of Death* might be good for a spin now and then, but is hardly able to create some lasting impression.

Udraborokh - Ad Oculos Demonstrare

(Black Metal; Germany)

10 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) ----- (29:01)

<http://www.udraborokh.de/>

When you visit the homepage of the band, then you will find hardly any information. Not even a line-up or where the band comes from. A link to a MySpace site, but how this is related to the band remains unclear, some bits of information and that was it.

Oh well ... *Udraborokh* play some sort of underground old school black metal. Fast straight-forward, slightly noisy and also with a raw production, but not done over excess. *Burzum* and *Darkthrone* are the obvious references here, but the Germans' art comes with some strange – and somehow displaced – ambient interludes, whose purpose remains hidden; especially as they have no effect on the music except for disrupting the atmosphere. 1-2-1 might be the formula behind this release. Two metal compositions are wrapped in between two non-metal ones and the band sticks to this over the whole length of the album; the tracks *Blood* and *Interlude* would also belong to this category, because compared with the rest of the album, the difference is simply too large to come to a different conclusion.

Well, the band differs a bit when it comes to the overall approach on this album; as discussed before. But, aside from those counterpoints, the black metal tracks also differ in some respect; especially in terms of the tempo. It is not always the 'high speed' style which is followed but according to the length some amount of variation can be discovered. The vocals are well performed and are pretty close to what is generally performed in the black metal scene; they are a bit bloodless/powerless, though. Mr drum-computer does not ruin it and as the guitar play some good riffs now and then, it is actually possible to enjoy parts of this album. Would there be consistency in the concept, then *Ad Oculos Demonstrare* – weird name – might have been able to reach for higher levels, but for now the band is not able to create something outstanding or have a lasting impact.

The best track might be *Voice*, which I would like to recommend, because despite its slight shallowness in the arrangements, the nice layer in the background, gives it a somehow dark and haunting atmosphere.

Arszyn - Woda

(Ambient, Noise, Field Recordings; Poland)

1 Track (MP3 – Netlabel – Konkretourist) ----- (23:31)

<http://konkretourist.de/?p=278>

Some years ago I watched the film **Dancer in the Dark** with the Icelandic musician **Björk** as a main character. Even though I dislike the lyrics on her albums – they are to me nothing else but the all too common crap sung about in the pop genre – the music has always been somehow precious to me and I was happy to see/hear pieces of her art in the film as well. Well, the term 'field recordings' might be a bit misleading when it comes to her songs, but it would be fair to state that she took rhythm models and sounds from 'artefacts' (machines and trains for instances) and composed the rest of the tracks around it. Please watch or listen to I have seen it all in order to get in idea of what I am talking about.

On this album: *Arszyn* are from Poland, or to be more precise, from Gdansk; yes Dorota, the ignorant German has finally learned the name. On *Woda* this artist brings the aspects of field recordings to quite extreme levels: the one long track has a huge emphasis on the sound of water and the samples used for it were recorded over the course of several years – in Gdansk of course – and later re-arranged into a quite peculiar composition. The clashing of the sea on the shore, the noises created by a fountain, the sparkling of water ... such was used in a track of twenty-three minutes in length. It is a strange experience to listen to the final result of the mixing and arranging, because to most people all of these sounds are pretty common and familiar. Yet, to hear them in such a fashion



is bewildering and also a bit odd, due to the lack of reference and the aspect of contrast. When you listen to how the waves clash on the shore, you would hardly expect a dominant sound of water from a tap or something like this. *Arszyn* plays with the listener and created a kind of music, which is dense and atmospheric but also strange and slightly amusing. Maybe more startling contrasts would have made this music better: again the sound of the sea shore with a distinct falling of drops of water in a (empty?) bucket. To me there is a too large emphasis on flowing water, while other facets – raindrops for instance – are not considered; or some staged noises, like the emptying of a full bucket on the street or in a small canal.

So, while the idea is interesting and also the recording quite well executed, there is still some room left for improvement. Fans of water sounds should give this a try.

Glenn Ryszko – Soundwalk

(Fielf Recordings; Netherlands)

1 Track (MP3 – Netlabel – Konkretourist) ----- (14:19)

<http://konkretourist.de/?p=302>; <http://www.glennryszko.nl/>

Those who are familiar with the Futurism, will know the following listing:

1. *Roars, Thunderings, Explosions, Hissing roars, Bangs, Booms*
2. *Whistling, Hissing, Puffing*
3. *Whispers, Murmurs, Mumbling, Muttering, Gurgling*
4. *Screeching, Creaking, Rustling, Humming, Crackling, Rubbing*
5. *Noises obtained by beating on metals, woods, skins, stones, pottery, etc.*
6. *Voices of animals and people, Shouts, Screams, Shrieks, Wails, Hoots, Howls, Death rattles, Sobs*

It was taken from the **The Art of Noises (L'arte dei Rumori)**, written by **Luigi Russolo** in 1913 and it sums up his 'six families of noises'. His goal was to imitate them through instruments and to abandon the ordinary concepts of musical arrangements. The Futurist wanted to break down the age old barriers and to bring music to explore regions and styles of the music genre.

In *Soundwalk Glenn Ryszko* did not attempt to imitate the noises of nature or society, but recorded them and put them together. The listener is a silent and blind observer, thrown into a world of which this person does not know and is maybe also be unable understands anything due to a language barrier – there are some passages with recordings of discussions –; this would be the problem I have. Man is an animal with an endless thirst for news and curiosity, for knowledge and information. As such, listening to this fourteen minutes piece of music is a bit strange. First of all, the is the question whether there is a story, which is told via the continuous field recordings of sound from a town. Should this be the case, then another one would of course be the content of this and where it takes place.

Soundwalk leaves me a bit unsatisfied. I am able to hear everything and identify everything, but actually I understand nothing. Somehow I am reminded on something that had happened to me several years ago. A Chinese friend gave me an invitation to visit her in Shanghai and stay ... somewhere... I cannot recall. I got the visa from the embassy in Hamburg but never had to use it, because it later turned out that she did not intended to show me the city and be my guide. So, when I listen to the music of *Glenn Ryszko*, then I am reminded on what turned me of this trip several years ago. It was the fear to be in a place in which I would nothing be like an alien, without any chance of breaking the barrier; you may want to watch the film **Lost in Translation** in order to further grasp what I mean.

This is a strange release ... but I have a certain fancy for this type of things. Give it a try.

Note:

An explanation on the background of this release is given in a pdf, which comes with this release.

Music and information on Luigi Russolo:

http://www.ubu.com/sound/russolo_1.html

Index pictures:

<http://www.archive.org/details/1917photogramsof00londuoft>

Outlook:

A discussion of the cover versions of Venom's track Black Metal

A view on the Constant series

Some essays

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